



From the Ambassador's Desk

A Bi-Monthly Update from the U.S. Embassy in Lisbon

December 2015

Versão Portuguesa



AMBASSADOR'S MESSAGE

>> [From Ambassador Robert A. Sherman](#)



Autumn in Portugal proved eventful both for Portuguese democracy and for bilateral relations between our countries. The season commenced with the campaigning and debates leading up to legislative elections on October 4. As a veteran of several presidential campaigns in the United States myself, the exercise of our most fundamental constitutional right – that of choosing our leadership – always invigorates me. This year was no different. Election Day in particular brought out the best of Portugal: civic-minded voters enduring poor weather to cast their ballots, poll workers and party members working late into the night to ensure fair processes and timely results, and citizens of all stripes glued to their

televisions, computers and smartphones to learn the outcomes. Hailing from a nation whose presidential (vice parliamentary) system normally delivers clear-cut election results, I found the post-vote negotiations between parties and coalitions always fascinating, sometimes frustrating, but ultimately healthy for Portuguese democracy. The Embassy sends its congratulations to Prime Minister Antonio Costa and looks forward to working with him and his ministers.

Fall closed in Portugal with the 34th meeting of the U.S.-Portugal Standing Bilateral Commission (SBC) on Terceira Island December 11. The SBC has its roots in the 1995 Agreement on Cooperation and Defense, and it expanded in 2011 to cover the panoply of areas in which our countries engage. As in past years, high-level delegations from both countries discussed past progress and future plans on defense cooperation, justice and home affairs, science and technology, trade and investment, and cooperation in the Azores. We paid particular attention to the ongoing streamlining of the U.S. Air Force presence at Lajes Airbase on Terceira, including the Embassy's efforts to help spur economic growth in the Azores. Great advances were made since the extraordinary June 2015 SBC in Washington and are reflected in the joint statement our delegations issued at the close of the December meeting. The Commission will reconvene in the United States in spring, and I look forward to participating.

As we prepare for the coming year, I am thankful for the opportunity to continue to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to Portugal, with such an excellent Embassy team and with so many inspiring and committed partners. I look forward to a very productive and rewarding 2016 with all of you! Boas festas and happy new year!

FEATURE STORY

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The Embassy in June organized a visitor program for Portuguese public and private sector officials that focused on the challenging topic of cyber policy. Participants included representatives from the National Security Authority's Cyber Security Operations Center, Ministry of Defense, Presidency, and a prominent law firm, among others. While in Washington they met with a broad range of government, private sector, and civil society experts at the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Defense, National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), George Washington University, and BitSight Networks. At a July breakfast that U.S. Ambassador Robert Sherman hosted, they called the visitor program a "once in a lifetime experience that exceeded all expectations," and said they had "found their partners" as a result of the visit.

Participants praised the U.S. multi-stakeholder approach to developing cyber policy and also requested more regular dialogue with the U.S. private sector, government, and academia. Only the private sector was dynamic and nimble enough to innovate and respond to cyber threats in real time, they reasoned. Participants also agreed to regularly convene multi-stakeholder cyber policy meetings at the working and director levels. They also suggested U.S. military service academies and universities would find willing exchange partners in Portugal and voiced intention to begin exploratory contacts. One visitor emphasized that Portuguese business schools should offer a cybersecurity curriculum like that of George Washington University's World Executive MBA with Cybersecurity. Another suggested Portugal's Catolica University as another possible partner for U.S. universities, given its work to develop cyber awareness training for judges and prosecutors.

Encouraged by the visit, all looked forward to working with the Embassy and U.S. stakeholders to regularize future cyber training and policy coordination. The Embassy is pleased with the success of the cyber visitor program and will continue to work with the Portuguese government, academics, and civil society to enhance our cooperation.

UPCOMING EVENTS

>> [Study of the U.S. Institutes Exchange Program Application](#)

The Study of the U.S. Institutes (SUSI) are five-to-six week academic programs for small groups of foreign undergraduate students, scholars, and teachers which aim to promote a better understanding of American people and institutions; explore the diversity and culture of the United States; and develop or expand curricula on U.S. studies in colleges and universities overseas. Focusing on themes in U.S. studies, Institutes are hosted by universities and colleges throughout the United States and are designed to offer a balance between academic and experiential learning through an intensive academic program, site and cultural visits, an educational study tour, and opportunities to engage with American peers through homestays, community service, and research.

For details and application, visit the links below:

- [For Scholars](#) - deadline: Jan. 4
- [For Secondary Educators](#) - deadline: Jan. 4
- [For Student Leaders](#) - deadline: Feb. 16

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